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# CHICAGO Jewish Star

למצא דברי-חפץ וכתוב ישר דברי אמת

25

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## Revelation XVI:12

► IS THIS HOW IT ENDS: THE 6TH BOWL, WATER DRIED UP?

By DANIEL PIPES  
MIDDLE EAST FORUM

A ranking Iranian political figure, ISSA KALANTARI, recently warned that past mistakes leave Iran with water supplies so insufficient that up to 70 percent, or 55 million out of 78 million Iranians, would be forced to abandon their native country for parts unknown.

Many facts buttress Kalantari's apocalyptic prediction:

Once lauded in poetry, Lake Urmia, the Middle East's largest lake, has lost 95 percent of its water since 1996, going from 31 billion cubic meters to 1.5 billion.

What the Seine is to Paris, the Zayanderud was to Isfahan — except the latter went bone-dry in 2010.

Over two-thirds of Iran's cities and towns are "on the verge of a water crisis" that could result in drinking water shortages; already, thousands of villages depend on water tankers.

Unprecedented dust storms disrupt economic activity and damage health.

Nor are Iranians alone in peril; many others in the arid Middle East may also be forced into unwanted, penurious, desperate exile.

With a unique, magnificent exception, much of the Middle East is running out of water due to such maladies as population growth, shortsighted dictators, distorted economic incentives, and infrastructure-destroying warfare. Some specifics:

Egypt: Rising sea levels threaten not only to submerge the country's coastal cities (including Alexandria, population 4 million) but also to contaminate the Nile Delta aquifer, one of the world's largest groundwater reservoirs.

The Ethiopian government finally woke to the



— CAGLE CARTOONS

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 3



— ASHERNET PHOTO

### Remembering Eli Cohen

The life of Eli Cohen — the Israeli Mossad spy who was hanged in Syria on May 18, 1965 — was commemorated at the Presidential Residence in Jerusalem on that day, 50 years later. Cohen's widow, Nadia, and their three children were present.

Cohen, who assumed the name Kamel Amin Thaabet, for three years passed sensitive information back to Israel obtained from Syrian government officials. His activities were exposed, with Soviet assistance, in January 1965.

Speaking at the event was the present head of the Mossad, Tamir Pardo (above). ☑

## Entry Update: Wikipedian gets \$1 million prize

By LLOYD SACHS

SPECIAL TO THE CHICAGO JEWISH STAR

JIMMY WALES, whose Wikipedia entry notes his claim to be the sole founder of the online Wikipedia encyclopedia, was one of three International Dan David Prize category winners for 2015.

The award for "launching the world's largest online encyclopedia," was presented on May 17 at Tel-Aviv University.

Each of the three award categories receives \$1 million. ☑



— JIMMY WALES AT DAVID DAVID PRIZE CEREMONY / ISRAELI HADARI PHOTO

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 2

## SHAVUOT 5775



All 1.2 million letters of the Hebrew Bible have been engraved on a gold-plated silicon chip the size of a pinhead. ☑

## ITSY-BITSY BIBLE

By DOUGLAS WERTHEIMER and EDGAR ASHER

SPECIAL TO THE CHICAGO JEWISH STAR

Only a prophet like MOSES could have foreseen that words which were engraved in stone might thousands of years later be etched in gold on a silicon chip the size of a pinhead.

It's the world's smallest Bible, and it went on display in April at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. The event marked the 50th anniversary of the Shrine of the Book facility, home to the Dead Sea Scrolls.

While the so-called "Nano Bible" — the complete Hebrew Bible etched onto a microchip no larger than a grain of sugar — has just gone on display in Jerusalem, it was actually first printed in 2007.

The first copy of it was given to Pope BENEDICT XVI during his visit to Israel in May 2009 by then-Israeli President SHIMON PERES.

The Nano Bible project was conceived of by Prof. URI SVAN, and managed by him and Dr. OHAD ZOHAR of the Russell Berrie Nanotechnology Institute at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa, according to *Science Daily*.

The text, consisting of over 1.2 million letters, is carved on a chip less than

1/1000th of an inch, by means of a focused ion beam. The beam dislodges gold atoms from the plating and creates letters, similar to the way the earliest inscriptions were carved in stone.

The writing process takes about 90 minutes, but the computer program guiding the equipment took three months to prepare.

The letters belong to a font unique to this technology and appear darker against their gold background. In order to read the text, it is necessary to use a microscope capable of 10,000 times magnification or higher.

Dense information storage is not unique to human culture.

The blueprints of all organisms are stored by nature at even higher densities in long DNA molecules and transmitted in this form over generations.

Commenting on the miniaturization achievement, Technion President PERETZ LAVIE said that "The Nano Bible exhibition is a fascinating confluence of history, culture, and cutting-edge science — where the Land of the Bible meets the Start-Up Nation." ☑

## CHICAGO JEWS TIE FOR #4

Chicago has the 4th largest percentage of Jews in a U.S. metro area, tied with three other cities, according to a May 2015 report by the Pew Research Center on "America's Changing Religious Landscape".

Three percent of the metro areas of Chicago, San Francisco, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles are Jewish, according to the report. The largest percentages are in Miami (9%), New York City (8%), and Boston and Washington, D.C. (both 4%). ☑ — JEWISH STAR

## Anti-BDS bill passed

► ILLINOIS BILL OPPOSING BOYCOTT OF ISRAEL SAILS THROUGH LEGISLATURE, BUT LOBBYING IS FIERCE

By GILA WERTHEIMER

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

"It passed!" an excited State Representative SARA FEIGENHOLTZ (D-12) told the JEWISH STAR May 18, shortly after the bill she had sponsored opposing the economic boycott of Israel passed the full Illinois House.

"Every light was green!" she added, meaning that the vote was unanimous.

It was 102-0.

The legislation, Senate Bill 1761, was sponsored in the Senate by State Senator IRA SILVERSTEIN (D-8) and by Feigenholtz in the House (House Bill 4011).

Gathering her thoughts after the vote, she said that the bill's passage "sends a message to the BDS [boycott, divestment and sanctions] movement that Illinois appreciates the economic relationship with Israel," and that its support for the Jewish state "is strong and growing."

Silverstein echoed her sentiments. "I'm very pleased that it passed," he told the JEWISH STAR, adding that the bill ensures Illinois continues to be an ally of Israel, as it faces economic boycotts.

The bill prohibits any state agency from invest-

ing in foreign companies that boycott Israel. It requires the five state-funded pension systems and the Illinois Board of Investment to review their holdings and divest from such companies.

When the bill passed the Illinois Senate by a vote of 49-0 on April 22, and was then sent for review to the House Executive Committee, locally well-known anti-

Is- rael groups took to the Illinois sends the government website to register their opposition to

the pro-Israel movement, in an attempt to influence the committee to vote against the bill.

They failed, and on May 13, the executive committee members passed Senate Bill 1761 by 10-0. From there it went to the full House.

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 2

## Tempest engulfs Israel

► VATICAN, FIFA, FRENCH (AND U.S.?) STEP UP DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE

By LINDA GRADSTEIN

THE MEDIA LINE

The Palestinian decision to internationalize their conflict with Israel seems to be paying off as Israel is coming under diplomatic pressure on several fronts at the same time.

The Vatican decision to recognize "Palestine" as a state, an expected French-sponsored resolution to the United Nations Security Council, and the possible expulsion of Israel from FIFA, the international soccer federation, are creating the sense that Israel is losing the diplomatic battle.

"There is a sense of erosion," a senior Israeli official told TML on condition of anonymity. "We see more and more countries and organizations buying into the unilateral logic of the Palestinians."

But, he warned, ultimately it will not be possible to create a Palestinian state without Israeli approval. "No matter how much

the Palestinians obtain in declarations and international organizations it can't replace negotiations," he said. "Palestinians have given up on negotiations and we believe it's a huge mistake."

The latest decision by the Vatican to sign a treaty with the "State of Palestine", concerning the Holy See's activities in the Palestinian Authority, came before a meeting between the Pope and the President of the Palestinian Authority, MAHMOUD ABBAS.

It was an important symbolic move by the leader of the world's 1.2 billion Catholics.

At the UN, the Vatican and Palestine are both considered non-member observer states.

In a statement, PLO Executive Committee member HANAN ASHRAWI welcomed the Vatican decision. PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 4

# Anti-BDS bill

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

For the next several days, opponents and supporters of the bill continued to make their positions known online.

Then on May 18, the vote was taken and the bill passed unanimously.

It will now be sent to Gov. BRUCE RAUNER, who had already indicated that he would sign it into law (JEWISH STAR, March 27).

At 1:15 p.m. on May 18, just after the vote, the governor tweeted, "Looking forward to signing #SB1761".

## Unusual attention

While no legislators voted against the bill, one source who asked not be named told the JEWISH STAR that it "took a lot of hard lobbying" to get the bill passed. Public input may have affected the effort.

Both proponents and opponents of the bill went online in large numbers to the government website to fill out "Witness Slips" to register their positions, in an effort to sway legislators' views.

By May 17, there were 1,904 slips, with 1,037 (54.6%) supporting the bill, and 863 (45.4%) opposing it. Four registered "no position".

It was, according to Feigenholtz, an unusual amount of attention for a bill to receive.

Prominent among the 836 individuals signing on as opponents to the bill were those identifying themselves as members or representatives of Jewish Voice for Peace, CAIR (Council on Islamic-American Relations), Students for Justice in Palestine and individuals affiliated with Chicago-area universities.

The groups are all well-known for their anti-Israel activities, and the BDS

movement targeting Israel has gained traction on university campuses.

The 1,037 individuals who registered online as supporters of the bill included representatives or members of the Jewish United Fund, American Jewish Committee, and area synagogues and universities.

There was no audit of the Witness Slips, and affiliations were all self-reported.

While the bill's first sponsors — Feigenholtz in the House and Silverstein in the Senate — introduced it to counter any boycott of Israel, the bill as amended was broadened to include companies that do business with Iran and Sudan.

The bill also gained co-sponsors as it progressed.

To carry out the bill's divestment provisions, it establishes the Illinois Investment Policy Board.

By April 1, 2016, the board is required to compile a list of companies that boycott Israel or do business with Iran or Sudan. State agencies will have to divest from those companies, and will not be permitted to invest in them.

## Previous effort failed

This is not the first time anti-boycott legislation has been attempted in Illinois.

Last year, a resolution calling on university and college presidents publicly to condemn academic boycotts of Israel was defeated before it could reach the Senate (JEWISH STAR, April 11, 2014).

That resolution was sponsored by Silverstein, at the initiative of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, which also drafted the wording.

On the federal level,

## SB1761 — For & Against

Illinois House Executive Committee Hearing

### • Witness Slips

The House Executive Committee accepted "Witness Slips" from anyone who wished to support or oppose the proposed anti-BDS bill SB1761; the forms were filled-out online, and were not vetted.

Those filling out Witness Slips were able to list their name; firm, business or agency; and who they represented. Many Witness Slips were incorrectly completed, some names appeared two or three times, others contained only one name.

Under the "Firm, Business or Agency" heading, one proponent of the bill wrote: "private citizen, grew up in Chicago, Illinois, still root for the Bears".

### • For: 54.6%; Against: 45.4%

By May 13, the date of the scheduled hearing, 1,414 Slips had been submitted, an unusually large number; 51.1% (723) supported the bill, 48.8% (691) opposed it.

The number of Slips continued to increase; by May 17, there were 1,904 total slips: 54.6% (1,037) in favor; 45.4% (863) opposed; 4 expressing no position.

### • Opponents

As of May 17, the largest bloc of opponents came from those who self-identified with groups on the Anti-Defamation League's "Top Ten Anti-Israel Groups in the U.S." (2013): Jewish Voice for Peace (61 Slips); American Muslims for Palestine (9); Students for Justice in Palestine (7).

A notable number of Witness Slips were from people at the University of Illinois (13; Chicago and Campaign) and the University of Chicago (11).

Other groups included the Council on American-Islamic Relations, Chicago (8), and the American Friends Service Committee (4), the Christian group with the largest representation.

### • Proponents

As of May 17, the largest bloc of self-declared proponents came from Anshe Emet Synagogue (31), the Jewish United Fund (15; various bodies), and the American Jewish Committee (11).

The vast majority of proponents self-identified by their name only; while approximately the same number of groups were represented by Opponents and Proponents, the Proponent groups were mainly represented by 1-3 people. ❏

Source: JEWISH STAR research.

two anti-boycott laws that targeted American individuals and companies that complied with the Arab boycott of Israel were enacted in 1976 (the Ribicoff Amendment) and in 1977 (amendments to the Export Administration Act).

Prior to that, New York and California had adopted their own anti-boycott laws, which the federal ones su-

perceded.

Illinois-based companies Baxter International and Sara Lee were among companies that were fined for complying with the Arab boycott of Israel.

With Senate Bill 1761, "all eyes are on Illinois," Feigenholtz said. ❏



## YOU BE THE JUDGE

"The biggest challenge the Arab world is facing is that it's moving from a place of diversity to a place of uniformity, from a place where we had Kurds and Yazidis and Jews to a place where people are hostile to each other just because they're different."

### TOPIC Israel is hope for Arab World

Today, this is a tragedy. Yazidis are being tortured and raped in Iraq, the last church in Afghanistan was destroyed in 2010, and others are being persecuted across the region.

Israel is important, not just for the Jewish world but also the Arab world.

While Muslims are being kicked out by each other, Israel is the only minority in the region which keeps hope alive for the Arab world. As long as Israel exists, there is a chance we can move back from uniformity to diversity.

There's no doubt that what happened in 1948 was devastating for Palestinians. They got pushed out of their homes, suffered an immense loss and were scattered around the world.

The question is: how do we deal with this tragedy? When a group defines itself as victims, it is no longer held accountable for terrible crimes. Like when people justify terrorism, saying it's simply a response. This is a tragic perspective.

The only way to mend the past is to build a future, and the only way to do that is to invest in education, the economy and our children, to make a place which we can all proudly call home. ❏

— Source: Interview with George Deek, an Israeli Arab Christian who is Israel's Deputy Ambassador to Norway, cited in Josh Jackman, "Arab who is a diplomat for Israel," *Jewish Chronicle*, London, May 7, 2015.

## CHICAGO JEWISH STAR QUOTE OF THE WEEK

# Wales

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

lion. The two other category winners were historians PETER R. BROWN and ALESSANDRO PORTELLI, and biology researchers CYRUS CHOTHIA, DAVID HAUSSLER, and MICHAEL S. WATERMAN.

Wikipedia is among the top 10 most popular websites. Produced in 288 languages, all of the Wikipe- dias contain some 35 million articles (the English version, with 4.8 million articles, is the largest).

The "great gift to the world of a free encyclopedia for every single person on the planet, in their own language," Wales, 48, said at the event, meant not just "free of cost, but also freely licensed — so that you are allowed to copy, modify, and redistribute our work freely."

"Wikipedia is not just this one website," Wales said, "but a movement to share knowledge globally."

Wikipedia itself appears in a Hebrew-language edition which Wales characterized in 2011 as "quite advanced". Wales is a one-time financial trader in Chicago who has been to Israel many times. ❏

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